



# THE BORDER OF THE LAKE



AGNES LEE



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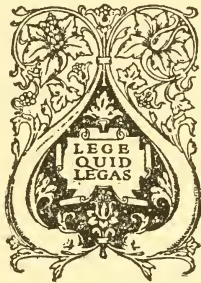




# THE BORDER OF THE LAKE

BY  
AGNES LEE

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THE BORDER OF THE LAKE





## THE WANDER-WOMAN

THE town and woods I span  
From height to height securely.  
And if I love no man,  
I love no woman, surely!  
O, give me day and the sun thereof,  
And night with never a goal,  
And never a love that's worth the love,  
But the love of a child's young soul!

Rains from the heaven's wide arch  
Troop down the dawn to smother.  
The long-lost waters march  
Back to the sea, their mother.  
The byre shall roof till dawn be red.  
Then on from sun to sun.  
They are more than the price of a crust and bed,  
The smiles of my little one.

The tide the hour shall beat,  
The turbulent reminder.  
Kind are the folk we meet.  
The birds and beasts are kinder.  
Then up the road and o'er the wild,  
And through the darkest door,  
With ever and ever a little child,  
That skips and trips before.

## LEAVES

LITTLE dead leaves, little dead leaves,  
Clamouring round my door,  
Now the summer wanes and the autumn cleaves!  
I have seen ye oft before.

*We are little dead hands, little dead hands,  
Tapping, thy walls around.  
Living, we hid the sky's blue lands,  
But now we hide the ground.*

Little dead hands, beckoning me  
Forth from a fire's red glow,  
If ye will tell me whither beck ye,  
I will open my door, and go.

## MOTHERHOOD

MARY, the Christ long slain, passed silently,  
Following the children joyously astir  
Under the cedrus and the olive-tree,  
Pausing to let their laughter float to her.  
Each voice an echo of a voice more dear,  
She saw a little Christ in every face;  
When lo, another woman, gliding near,  
Yearned o'er the tender life that filled the place.  
And Mary sought the woman's hand, and spoke:  
"I know thee not, yet know thy memory tossed  
With all a thousand dreams their eyes evoke  
Who bring to thee a child beloved and lost.

"I, too, have rocked my little one.

O, He was fair!

Yea, fairer than the fairest sun,

And like its rays through amber spun

His sun-bright hair.

Still I can see it shine and shine."

"Even so," the woman said, "was mine."

"His ways were ever darling ways,"—

And Mary smiled,—

"So soft, so clinging! Glad relays

Of love were all His precious days.

My little child!

My infinite star! My music fled!"

"Even so was mine," the woman said.

Then whispered Mary: "Tell me, thou,  
Of thine." And she:  
"O, mine was rosy as a bough  
Blooming with roses, sent, somehow,  
To bloom for me!  
His balmy fingers left a thrill  
Within my breast that warms me still."

Then gazed she down some wilder, darker hour,  
And said, when Mary questioned, knowing not:  
"Who art thou, mother of so sweet a flower?"  
"I am the mother of Iscariot."

## TO A DREAMER

BUILD air-castles, child.  
Build high and build regal.  
To gem-paven halls  
Bring bloom of the wild  
And wing of the eagle,  
To blazon the walls.

Bring laughter and lay.  
Float standard and streamer  
From bastions upsprung.  
O when you are gray,  
Dream yet, for the dreamer  
Forever is young!

## THE JUGGLER

COME, children, come as I call,  
And over the play-stead gleam!  
I stand by the middle wall  
To waken your wildest dream.  
Now, fathers, your babies fetch,  
With your pennies, or two, or ten.  
Yea, pity a juggling wretch.  
*Ye are all of ye juggling men!*

Now the balls fly  
Thither and nigh,  
Purple and yellow.  
Come, little fellow!  
Come, little maid!  
Be not afraid.  
Dirks in the air,  
Far away! There!  
Where did they go,  
Whether or no?  
How shall they come,  
Silver and dumb?  
Out of his cap!  
Out of her lap!

For one he tosses a truth,  
And one he tosses a lie.  
Some juggle with laws, forsooth,  
And some with a calumny.

And one hath a trick-tra-la  
He juggles upon his pen.  
Ye call him a poet. Ha!  
*Ye are all of ye juggling men!*

Now the balls fly,  
Thither and nigh,  
Purple and yellow.  
Come, little fellow!  
Come, little maid!  
Be not afraid.  
Out of her breast  
Birds shall fly west,  
Birds shall fly north.  
Hither they forth  
Out of her hair  
Into the air,  
Into the skies  
Out of her eyes!

My bonnet of bells I doff,  
Ye mimics of men and maids!  
I must shoulder my shams, and off  
To the valley of evening shades.  
I must leave the children's land.  
Pennies? Pennies again?  
Now thanks to the little hand!  
*Ye are all of ye juggling men!*

## THE BOY CRUSADER

*“Father, my feet are bleeding sore,  
With stubble, rock and stem.  
I see a roof, the hill-top o’er!  
Is this Jerusalem?”*

“Jerusalem is far,—perchance  
As far again away  
As our belovèd land of France  
We left at spring’s first ray.”

*“Father, I hunger. Bread is none.  
The way seems long to go!”*

“Now have no hunger, little one,  
But hunger for the foe.

“The Arab and the Turk now tear  
The sacred citadel,  
And alien armies cloud the air  
Like grasshoppers of hell.

“The son of the Egyptian slave  
Proclaims the pagan horde.  
Then on! then on! to swell the brave  
Militia of the Lord!”

*“Father, at noon an agèd man  
Dropped fainting on the wold.  
I saw thee loiter from the van,  
I saw thee take his gold.”*



“By Urban and by Adrian, yea!  
The deed was in the right.  
'Tis writ: ‘The thief of yesterday  
Shall be to-morrow’s knight.’ ”

*“Father, I see a sunlit tower  
Gleam like a diadem!  
Is this the honey and the flower?  
Is this Jerusalem?”*

“Hush, child! ’Tis but a stable-town  
Where beasts of burden wait.  
'Tis not for many a red sundown  
We reach the holy gate.”

*“Father, last night I could not rest.  
I saw, from my dim place,  
A face lie laughing on thy breast.  
'Twas not my mother’s face.”*

“By Urban and by Adrian, hush!  
The crimson cross shall win,  
For him who seeks the battle-rush,  
Remission for all sin.”

*“O I am but thy step’s delay!  
O father, loose my hand!  
I can no longer keep the way,  
Nor reach the holy land.*

*“Yet it were sweet to live, and toil  
Unto the warring tryst,  
To spill my blood upon the soil  
That drank the blood of Christ.*

*“Father! I see a rock-built dome  
Within my closing eyes.  
I see a city through the gloam,  
And sworded angels rise.*

*“They come, they come, with shout and  
stir!  
In hosts they gather them!  
Is . . . this . . . the holy sepulcher? . . .  
Is . . . this . . . Jerusalem?”*

## RAINDROPS

SHE thought the rain would surely bring  
The dear one to her door.  
Earth's every little upward thing  
A cap of raindrops wore.

She knew he loved their peaceful sound,  
And blessed the gleaming gems,  
Or laughed to think his forehead crowned  
With such cool diadems.

Upon the path she heard them beat,  
And whispered low his name.  
Sometimes she took them for his feet,  
His feet that never came.

She heard them falling in the rills,  
And wept for what might be,  
Nor caught the music on the hills  
Of higher destiny.

## YOUNG ROSINELLE

YOUNG Rosinelle,  
Following the silver stair,  
Looked on mere and hillock fair.  
Dim lay the dell.

Bright, starry dust  
From the stair fell down through time.  
Once she had begun to climb,  
Climb then she must.

“Come, daughter, back!”  
Went her mother’s lonely call—  
“Child, thy mother was thine all,  
Yet now, alack,

“Now shreds of dreams  
Fill thine eyes that turn from me!  
Daughter, what beseeches thee,  
Where the moon gleams?”

Called Rosinelle:

“O the secrets crossed my door,  
And I am a child no more,  
For their far spell!

“Helpless thou art.  
Steel-girt is her hidden power  
Who shall scale the moon’s high tower.  
Hush, mother-heart!”

“Hear, Rosinelle!  
Song of home thy mother sings.”  
“Nay, my heart hath song of wings,  
Wings that compel.

“Once, mother sad,  
Once thy feet would climbing stray.  
And hast thou forgot the way?  
Then, sweet and mad

“Did the moon glow.  
And thy mother sought and yearned.  
But thine eyes were dreaming turned,  
Ah, long ago!”

“Child of my fears,”  
Called her mother far to her,  
“Well I know the days that were,  
And the wild tears!”

Called Rosinelle:  
“Tears or triumph, I foresee  
That my child shall dream from me.  
May she dream well!”

Called Rosinelle:  
“And her feet shall upward roam,  
While a little song of home  
Floats from the dell!”

## STEPHANA

“WE THOUGHT her running never would stop.  
And why did she leave our sight?”

“*O, she has gone to the high hill-top,  
Where she loves the lingering light.*”

“Why did she hurry from us all?  
We followed so merry-wild!”

“*She heard you neither speed nor call.  
She is fancy’s darling child.*”

“*She rises out of the hush of dark  
Into a hush of day.  
She may not hear the song of lark,  
Nor your resounding play.*”

“No laugh is so bright as Stephana’s laugh,  
No eyes are so clear and blue.”

“*O, they’re the speech of her soul, by half  
Glimpsing and laughing through.*”

“We never before felt anything soft,  
Till we felt of Stephana’s hair.  
Look, we can see it waving aloft,  
Abrim of the hill-top fair.

“Why to the hill-top did she go,  
Where never our feet may stir?”

*“To hear the secrets we may not know,  
That the fairies whisper to her;*

*“To dance to the music of fairy beat,  
With fairy folk. And ah,  
Ah, this is why no smile is so sweet  
As the smile of Stephana!”*

## MOCK SUNLIGHT

MY WINDOWS face the northern sky austere.  
A melancholy light alone is theirs.

The Sun they never drew.  
Across the way his flaming glory fares  
To other windows, fortunèd all the year  
His image to renew.

Each morning unto mine a phantom cold,  
A mirrored Sun they send, a pale decoy,  
My somber house to haunt,  
Like love's warm sunlight flashed from eyes of  
joy  
To wistful eyes that never shall behold  
The royal ministrant.



### THREE YEARS

AT VIGIL now above her sleep  
The moon comes bending low.  
The sea wafts music tender, deep.  
A million star-eyes glow.

Her sweetness moon and stars and sea  
Through scent of evening say.  
Her years, a triune mystery,  
Have hither passed to-day.

From depths of dawn incarnadine  
I saw them upward start,  
Draw near me wistfully, to twine  
Soft hands about my heart.

Their darling looks were different looks,  
Their touches not the same.  
They bore to me three separate books,  
With love's one luminous name.

Again I trod a wonder-isle  
Beneath an aureole,  
Where infant eyes first held a smile,  
A dream of heaven in the soul;

Again caught petals pure as snows,—  
A little word was each, —  
Such dear, shy things as innocence blows,  
First fluttered on wings of speech;

Beheld again a marvel wrought  
Within a weed from the wild.  
For weeds are fairest flowers, when brought  
With the love of a gleaming child.

Three years! To-day I trembled as  
I saw her summer-crowned,  
Standing so small, her hair, like grass,  
Waving so near the ground!

But love shall guard her dusk and light.  
Sheltered and warm is she.  
Three little years wing down the night.  
A Fourth clings fast to me!

## THE SINGER OF THE SHADOWS

*If I could dwell  
Where Israfael  
Hath dwelt, and he where I,  
He might not sing so wildly well  
A mortal melody,—  
While a bolder note than this might swell  
From my lyre within the sky.*  
—Edgar Allan Poe.

FROM far beyond all death, all spaces dark,  
With art sublime  
The singer of the shadows came to mark  
His land, his time.

Stranger to joy, in bitterness he trod  
The ways of men.  
The hour's reality was not his god,  
Nor day his ken.

His tenebrous thoughts harmoniously soared  
On sovereign breath  
In mystical vibrations of the chord  
Of night and death.

Poet of grief, he sought her loneliest cave,  
Her ultimate aisle,  
Her ruined keep, her mouldering architrave  
And peristyle.

Poet of tombs, the midnight was his theme.  
    Adventuring far,  
He pierced the opal center of a dream,  
    Or of a star.

Poet of beauty, he bestowed her sleep,  
    And rich rebirth  
In music masterful, fantastic, deep,  
    To thrill the earth,—

Each note the whisper of a soul, apace  
    O'er passion sped,  
Driven to crowd the ghostly populace  
    Of voices dead.

Let those who walk with lore the beaten road  
    From others ask  
The daily bread of thought, cheer for the load,  
    Sun for the task.

An hour there is when sunshine brings to pain  
    Unfaith, unrest,  
When she would feel the footfalls of the rain  
    Upon her breast.

Then, circled in a misty aureole,  
    His charm distils  
A craved narcotic for the fevered soul,  
    From sorrow's hills.

Dear singer! Human hearts shall ever hold  
His melodies.  
They flash their beacons over manifold  
Fair lands and seas.

England acclaim him. France, attuned, aware,  
Greets him with bay,  
And calls him brother, through her Baudelaire,  
And Mallarmé.

And we to-day the sweeter count the soil  
His wandering pressed.  
His dust has flowered. The darkness of his toil  
The light has blessed.

Too long have lettered dwarf and neophyte  
Cast him their stones,  
Who flesh beheld, not spirit, worked their blight  
Above his bones.

Enough of slander! Bolted be the gate  
To evils wild  
Envies evolve and lies perpetuate!  
Art owns her child.

. . . . .  
Cradle him soft, O Art, who only knew  
To speak thy tongue,  
Thou being his life, and his life's residue  
The dream unsung.

Thy lesser planets let his glow outlive,  
High and apart,  
Who, earthbound, gave thee all he had to give—  
His tortured heart.

Pride has departed, Doom has crossed the door,  
Love calls farewell.  
But from thy firmament forevermore  
Shines Israfel!

## THE WAIF

I MET a threadbare waif below the town.  
Sad were his eyes, and from his dusty coat  
Roses no longer crimson dangled down.  
Pebbles that had been kisses decked his throat.

He held a cup, and listlessly and slow  
Drank wine, as one who had no joy thereof.  
And when I asked his name, he answered low:  
"My name is Habit—once they called me Love."

## SPEECHLESS LOVE

“WHO art thou, child,  
What is thy name, thou little songless boy,  
Hither impelled my peace-right to destroy?  
I guess; yet ah, I know not who thou art.  
Thine eyes are bright, and I can hear thy heart  
Beat very wild.”

Quiet to sit,  
Full of the strange, sweet language silence  
speaks,  
This is his power. From far high mountain-  
peaks  
He hath it, and through all infinity,  
Whether the sun decoy or shadow be,  
He guardeth it.

“O little one,  
O little one! the world is large and cold.  
Then let the melancholy world run old.  
But take my frozen hands unto thy breast,  
And tell me once the only name, the best,  
Ere die the sun.”

His eyes aflame  
Are wide and wet. Noon's light is on his hair.  
He would away, afar, he knows not where.  
But still he sits and keeps his secret well,  
And breaks his heart with what he will not tell,  
Yet names no name.



## THE IDOL

And also concerning Maachah the mother of Asa, the king, he removed her from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove.

2 Chronicles, XV.

“MOTHER, what dost thou sway unto,  
Ponder upon?”

“*Something to whisper to, pray unto,  
Asa, my son.*”

“Put off thy crown—then yea to thee—  
Bow and blaspheme!”

“*Take thou my queenhood—I say to thee,  
Take not my dream.*”

“Let me draw near to thy dream, mother,  
Let me draw near.  
Under the bough and the beam, mother,  
Let it appear.”

“*This my fingers made, leave to me!  
Bendest thou nigh?  
Thou my body made, cleave to me,  
Worship, as I!*”

“Nay, I have fired the form thereof,  
Fired the hair.  
How all the grove is warm thereof,  
Luminous, fair!

“See how the gold flame merrily  
Wasteth its breast.  
Hath it a word now verily  
For thy soul’s rest?

“Mark how the light forswearth it.  
Never it strove.  
The brook of Kidron beareth it  
Far from the grove.

“Cleansèd thy heart I show to thee,  
Well have I done.”

“*Woe to thee, woe to thee, woe to thee,  
Asa, my son!*”

## IN THE HOUSE OF THE SOUL

ACROSS the fair coppice the gables appear.

Men pause as they pass,

Saying "Evil's an alien that holdeth not here

Her shadowy glass"—

Saying "Here all the day in the still, ordered  
hours

How peacefully roll,

Life's azurine rills through escarpments of  
flowers,

Past the house of the soul!"

Serene at the portal in sun-lumined air

The housewife doth sit.

White, white is her garment, and smooth is her  
hair

As the amber of it.

At evenfall climbs she (the dark is before)

A stair, stealthily.

She glides through a hallway, she opens a door

With her glimmering key.

Lo, memory's room! Lo, the mouldering years!

She locks her fast in.

It feeds on her breast, and she drinks of its tears,

And sweet is the sin.

## A LAMENT

Out of the bloom and sun  
Constrained to an early rest,  
His twenty years are run,  
His aims are locked in his breast.

Earth covers with grass of spring,  
Nor careth, for all we fret,  
Who said in our sorrowing:  
"His bed-time is not yet!"

There stood where the cypress bends  
Senility, garrulous, cold.  
Now forth with the folk he wends  
In the sun with its bloom of gold.

O shape on the warm highway,  
Hugging your hundred years,  
Shivering all the day,  
Shaken with many fears—

Make me an answer true  
Out of the words you rave!  
Is life so sweet to you,  
That youth must fill your grave?

## FUTURITY

I WATCH a lovely child illumine  
The house with rose and heather-bell,  
And in her arms amid the bloom  
Divine the hidden asphodel.

I see the work of science fail,  
And hear the hapless word it saith,  
Ere, triumphing, it lift the grail  
Of life unto the lips of death.

I note the spirit's dual might,  
The hurtling blows, the shafts that rend,  
Where right seems wrong, and wrong seems  
right,  
And know the conqueror at the end.

I watch beside the river moon,  
And let another stretch a hand.  
Ever I know that late or soon  
Art's noble passenger shall land.

Unto the glittering To Be  
My glances pierce the cycles through.  
I see and wait, and wait and see,  
And say at last of all: "I knew."

## THE COWARD

OUT of the harbour, out to sea  
I glide, I glide.  
Grief it was urging me, urging me  
To seek the tide.

Fresh flies the wind, and salt the spume  
From crest to crest.  
Strong are my oars that dip the gloom,—  
But faint my breast.

Little home harbour, dear thou wert.  
But forth must I.  
Little home harbour of my hurt,  
Good-bye, good-bye!

Swiftly the lights recede. How soon  
The billows toss!  
Into the harbour of the moon  
I cross, I cross.

What is it looms so black before,  
With wild, wet locks?—  
Destiny,—from the ocean's floor  
That rises, mocks!

Cold is the dark. My failing arms  
    Guide not the boat.  
Fear is upon me. Devil-charms  
    Weigh round my throat.

Ah, home lights, draw me back from sea!  
    *The lights are gone.*  
Now help me, God, if God thou be!  
    For I must on!

## TWO WINDOWS

I SEE but this—I dwell so high—  
The tallest tree-top on the sky.

Claire has an attic window, too;  
She never sees the sun gleam through.

She looks on domes and grimy towers,  
And many clocks that clang the hours.

She says she likes the city's way,  
That all her life is holiday.

But once at noon I chanced to meet  
Our Claire upon the city street,

So weary-browed, I knew the stress,  
I knew her heart's great loneliness.

O, sometimes there's a cloud I see  
Between the blessèd sun and me,

And sometimes there's a sound I hear,  
Alone, when dusk is drawing near,

A sound like song in wayward flight,  
Or laughter on the wings of night.

Now keep me near thee, sweet, warm sky,—  
My attic is so safe, so high!

Fate, hold me here! Be all I know  
The topmost wave of apple-blow!



## COMPENSATION

OVER the grasses sere and brown  
The silver shadows press.  
With giant steps the sun strides down  
The golden terraces.  
Silver and gold! But my heart grieves:  
"O, for the little vanished leaves!"

•   •   •   •   •   •  
The ghosts of little leaves upsailed  
In song, on winter's wing:—  
"Forgotten wonders were. We veiled  
From you their gladdening.  
O lift your eyes across the plain!  
Behold, the hills have come again!"

## MID-OCEAN

THE one gray sea,  
The one gray sky,  
From dawn to dawn,  
And weary lawn  
Of deck, where we  
Pace fitfully,  
And onward sweep  
O'er infinite deep.

Knew we the gleam  
Of steadfast towers,  
Of roofs and spires,  
And household fires?  
Or did we dream?  
And were there flowers?  
The storms that blow  
Are all we know.

Through leaping cave  
Our caravan  
Imprisoned moves,  
And nothing proves  
But wave on wave.  
And what is man—  
A mote, to cross  
Where Time shall toss?

Down the abyss,  
Up the sky's way,  
We plunge, we pull.  
O wonderful!  
For man is this,  
That on the day,  
The hour he planned,  
Our ship must land!

## LONELINESS

*Alone to walk, alone to weep,  
Alone to face the final sleep!*

I heard the music of the trees  
Forever choiring in the breeze,

And in the woods the flowers that mass  
And shake afar their bells of glass.

On a high tower I set my light,  
And waited, waited through the night.

I set my signal over me.  
But no one passed upon the sea.

## THE FORSAKEN PATH

How straight the young path wore!  
So eager door to door  
Morning and evenfall  
    Friendship sped!  
But fateful words were cast.  
From door to door at last  
Look eyes inimical,  
    Rancour-fed.

Soon shall the infinite  
Tall grasses cover it,  
The clover be aware  
    And uncloze.  
Where footsteps are forgot  
Shall flame the bergamot,  
Or now and then a fair  
    Wilding rose.

O path. O path uncrossed!  
Is nothing ever lost,—  
No mood. no impulse free,  
    No black hour?  
In rains we know not of  
Drenched as the roots of love,  
Shall even enmity  
    Bear its flower?

## WHEN THE NIGHT COMES DOWN

LONELY night and chill thereof!  
Night of memories bled!  
This has been a woman's dread,  
Since a woman's love.

One to roam, and one to stand  
Longing and bereft,  
Still the lore that Sappho left  
Shows to every land.

Ah, but well the joy and rue,  
Well the long before,  
If one dusk he pass my door,  
At the hour we knew,

And remember, for the crown  
Of the stars that glow,  
Pass, and say: "I loved her so!"  
When the night comes down.

## THE WRECK

THERE was the wreck, a league from out the  
shore.

The crew were feasting when the crash was  
heard.

One long vibration, and the ship was calm,  
Till faces cut the fog upon the deck.

Soon came the sunlight forth and showed a wan,  
Gray field of glass, while darkling here and  
there

Life's lovers buoyed and sank, or desperately,  
With curses on their lips for such a wrong,  
Clung horror-keen to timbers that betrayed.

I wonder, was there one among them all  
Had waited wistful-souled for chance's sign,  
Who hailed the shock, and clove the deep with  
praise?

## ASPIRATION

THE running waves sigh,  
The cliffs are so high!  
The soaring cloud weeps,  
So high the star creeps.  
And thou, little heart,  
Tear-misty thou art  
As yon misty star,  
Love's face is so far!



## THE CHRISTCHILD

A WOMAN sings across the wild  
A song of wonder sweet,  
And everywhere her little Child  
Follows her gliding feet.

He flutters like a petal white  
Along the roadway's rim.  
When He is tired, at latter-light,  
His mother carries Him.

Sometimes a little silver star  
Floats softly down the air,  
Past mountains where the pure snows are,  
And sits upon His hair.

Sometimes, when darkness is unfurled,  
Upon her breast He lies,  
And all the dreams of all the world  
Flock to His dreamy eyes.

TO E. H.

(Acknowledging Lilies.)

WHEN they sought my view,  
Quaint as from a picture olden,  
Lilies fresh with dew,  
Tall and straight and white and golden,  
Thus I fancied you!  
Yet I lacked you, fancy winging,  
Till, with fervour true,  
In my soul I heard them singing.

## IN THE SPRING

Joyously planting, a young child said:  
"Seeds, you shall blossom when spring is new,  
And all the garden be gold and red,  
As all my dear little plans come true."

Spring has glided with fond, warm feet.  
All the dear little plans came true.  
But the fairest flower that ever was sweet  
Is lying lower than seed or dew.

## A CHILD'S QUEST

I SAW on heaven's boundaries  
A something gleam and shine.  
I said "A golden star it is,  
Out on the world's dim line."

I ran where led the little ray  
That through the twilight spun.  
"Now follow here," it seemed to say,  
And "Up the ledge now run."

Cold, cold the winter blew the sands.  
But on and on I passed.  
Said I: "The star will warm my hands,  
When once I hold it fast."

But ah! no golden star I found,  
And no horizon's edge.  
Only a spot of ice lay, round  
And shivering on the ledge.

And so I weep, as you would do,  
If you had run so far,  
To come upon the ice, where you  
Had hoped to find a star.

## LOVE'S WAY

O I COULD sing of love and sing again,  
Fashion a wonder-word love's way to prove,  
Attune my lyre to love's potential strain,  
    Who knew not love.

Now I would sing, would sing of love and fire.  
It is the day of days. But I am dumb.  
Yea, helpless I beseech a vacant lyre.  
    For love is come.

## BEFORE SLEEP

O CHILD of weeping, here's the night!  
O child of struggle, rest thee now.  
Let peace come nestle on thy brow.  
Put out the light—

Nor back unto the battle hark.  
Now in thy room at evening's goal  
Put out the light. And in thy soul  
Put out the dark.

## TO-DAY

To-DAY, a prattling child, goes forth attended  
By two unfailing nurses, forms half seeming,  
That with its shadow on the way are blended.  
And all its noise may startle not their dreaming.

Their eyes are sealed. Their dark lips give no  
tiding.

To-morrow, Yesterday, they turn them never.  
Thus laughs To-day, to each a hand confiding,  
A sound between two silences forever.

## DREAM LANGUAGE

MY DREAMS with many a light  
From thee come winging.  
Thou art the strength of my night,  
Singing and singing.

Sometimes in dark of sighs,  
Through clouds that ravel,  
A golden ray from the skies  
Tells thy soul's travel.

Or the mighty wave will rejoice,  
Till its cadence fill me.  
And I know the call of thy voice,  
For the hopes that still me,

As I wake, in the silence rare  
Of the night, grown rarer.  
O I wait thee, at day, blown fair!  
And the day is fairer!



## THE DESERTED HOUSE

THEY kept a lifeless form within the room,  
And decked his brow with roses red of bloom,  
Nor saw his face more white beneath the red.  
Beside the hearth a goodly feast they spread  
Of meat and wine. "He will not taste thereof!"  
They called,—and called at last: "Ah, dead is  
Love!

See! Who comes fingering his garment's hem?  
Destiny, drawn to sing Love's requiem!"

They have gone down their ways. The dwell-  
ing stands

Forsaken now amid the open sands.  
Mute is the morning of their minstrelsies.  
Yet of a night the moonlit organ-keys  
Rise to an unseen touch, the corridor  
Awakes to pattering footsteps on the floor,  
A little silver ghost runs desolate,  
And beats his arms against the iron gate.

## NOCTURNE

TRAFFIC sleeps and towers hide.  
On the bridge 'tis eventide.

Now each lamplight's golden quiver  
Dances on the peaceful river ;

And the gazing soul broods long,  
Sweet with its unuttered song.

Come, thou Night all still and fair!  
Spread thy beauty through the air.

Rock my heart with fancies bright,  
As the river rocks the light.

Waft my spirit long reprieve  
From its thoughts of yestereve,

When I saw the shadows shiver,  
And the mist was on the river,

And the lights were threads of tears  
Stretched across the endless years.

## A SONG OF THE TIDE

LIFT me into thy barque, Love.  
My own it is poor and spent.  
Take me out of the dark, Love,  
To the country of thy content.

I would sit so safe, so still, Love,  
Sheltered and sure and strong,  
My will my captain's will, Love.  
I have tossed in the tide so long!

Thine eyes are keen to the star, Love.  
Thou wilt not take me in.  
Thou speedest more fast, more far, Love,  
The land of the lights to win.

Thou'lt look not back from the stern, Love,  
When my barque is a blot of brown,  
To see it struggle and turn, Love,  
Or dip in the twilight down.

TO N. S.

With Tales by Stevenson,—

THE tales we three have read in the days of  
ember,  
That in some far year, on the circle of life's loud  
camp,  
You will read again perhaps, and, perhaps,  
remember,  
And ache for the little house and the quiet lamp.

## THE BORDER OF THE LAKE

### THE LAKE

O MIGHTY Lake, protean water, lore  
Of elemental passions swift and keen,  
More fair than any ocean I had seen!  
I loved thee for the city on thy shore,  
Struggling and passionate as thou, and for  
Thy far white company of sails serene,  
The schooner looming black upon thy sheen,  
The luring secret of thy treacherous floor,—

And for the pleasant room above thy piers,  
Whose windows opened on thy surges wild,  
Where I could hear thee thunder and rejoice.  
Then leap to me, O Lake, across the years,  
And take these memories of a little child  
Who could not go to sleep without thy voice!

### ANEMONES

Near to thy foam, over a sandy line,  
There was an ancient closure of oak-trees,  
About whose feet radiant anemones,  
Drinking the morning flush incarnadine,  
Laughed for their taste of such a sparkling  
wine.

How far the smoke-fed city was from these,  
Trailing a cloud of black along the breeze!  
Only thy breath their sweetness could divine.

I gathered, gathered under every bough,  
And took my clusters home. . . . The years are  
long!

Now in another land I dreaming sit  
Above a book, till city, grove and thou  
Come back to me, like flashes of a song,  
With one anemone I crushed in it.

#### THE SUICIDE

Sometimes, O Lake, I feared thee! I recall  
Coming upon a little somber band  
That hurried something silent o'er the sand.  
A woman's name beset the evenfall.  
I guessed the stiffened horror of her shawl,  
And followed not, who could not understand.  
But this I knew, watching thy waves expand:  
Love had she loved, yet loved thee more than all.

At night her footsteps pattered on the roof;  
Her frozen form made palpable the air;  
Her staring drowned eyes pierced my bedroom  
door.

Life's deep enigma thrilled with vague reproof  
In thy loud voice, and, filled with first despair,  
I feared thee, as I never feared before.

#### MOONLIGHT

I tip-toed to my window through the moon  
One silver hour, and saw thee tranquilly  
Stretching afar unto eternity.

Once to my shuddering spirit o'er the dune  
Thy face was dark. But now the air was boon,  
A light serene had risen over thee,  
And thou wert very fair and good to see,  
Soft with moon-diadems and breath of June,

Letting the infinite skies pierce down thy heart,  
Thy heart, as vast and infinite as they,  
Crooning so sweet, so wistful a decoy,  
Night lingered on, forgetful to depart,  
And for her peace could slumber not, but lay  
In wide-eyed wonder at her own deep joy.

#### CALM AND TUMULT

When thy far-jettying timbers were a gleam  
With winter, I would run their walls to scale,  
And found thee covered with a soft snow-veil,  
Light as the gauzy wonder of a dream.  
I saw thee hold thy breath, and rigid seem,  
As feigning death, cold above peak and shale  
And wreck and spar, stretched in thy shroud, as  
pale  
As palest wraith, calm with the calm supreme.

Or, after some tumultuous night, I found  
Thy giant lift of water crystallized  
To grottoes gemmed of roof and architrave,  
Vast, icy areas of mine and mound,  
And, eager, awed, myself in magic guised,  
I penetrated cave on echoing cave.

THE CASTLE

There stood a factory, old, forsaken, bare,  
Upon thy brim. But, winter storms begun,  
Thy foam a dazzling masonry had spun,  
And made of it a castle golden-fair,  
With bastions diamonded, and crystal flare  
Of parapets that caught the frozen sun,  
And radiant arches ogival, where won  
The jewelled gleam of many a spiral stair.

Sweet Phantasy! My will has lost her knack  
Of sorcery to clothe life's barren walls.  
Reason, her ancient enemy, has smiled  
And forced his fellowship upon my track,  
Till Phantasy is but a voice that calls:—  
"Whom I would keep must stay a little child!"



## THE GOD AND THE OPAL

To Théophile Gautier

GRAY caught he from the cloud, and green  
from earth,

And from a human breast the fire he drew,  
And life and death he blended in one dew.

A sunbeam golden with the morning's mirth,  
A wan, salt phantom from the sea, a girth  
Of silver from the moon, shot colour through  
The soul invisible, until it grew  
To fulness, and the opal song had birth.

And then the god became the artisan.  
With rarest skill he made his gem to glow,  
Carving and shaping it to beauty such  
That down the cycles it shall be to man,  
And evermore man's wonderment shall know  
The perfect finish, the immortal touch.

## THE BOYHOOD OF KEATS

BOUND to the gods whom every orb enrings,  
And passionate as mortal children are,  
He paced with golden footsteps of a star,  
Unheeded yet of the world's garlandings.  
Science drew near and uttered fateful things.  
Traffic rushed by upon its sounding car.—  
Ever he heard the Muse that from afar  
Besought him in a secret song of wings.

Brother of beauty! Dreamer of an art  
That was to limn Hyperion! Boy sublime!  
Our modern day is yearning back to thee,  
And, with its heart aglow upon thy heart,  
Feels the warm recentness of Milton's time,  
And Shakspeare, closer by a century!

## THE WRITTEN WORD

THE helpless written word! The word begun,  
What magic shall foretell the answering eye?  
Merriment may intrude upon a sigh,  
Or sober thought arrive to cloud a sun.  
The spoken word? A thousand signs upon  
The listener's face shall guide fortuity  
Within the shaping, and the blundering cry  
Of impulse in an echo be undone.

Yet if the pen have tarried? How the miles  
Go lengthening! The weary day but crawls  
To weary day, the oriole unheard,  
The banks bereft of any flower that smiles.  
And in the shadow all remembrance calls,  
And all the heart: "O, for the written word!"

## DISENCHANTMENT

EVER the calm abundant days in dream  
Across a pleasant land I used to pass.  
Above me in heaven's roseate amass  
I read with fervency a tale supreme  
Of friend and friend; or in the moon's long  
gleam

I bowed me over in the silver grass,  
Straining my eyes to see how lovely was  
The image of an angel in the stream.

Ah well! the land another name may bear,  
And now I count me of the worldly-wise.  
Still rather would I trust again, and stray  
Forever in the olden-scented air,  
Though fainter and more far down waves of  
sighs  
I saw a precious halo float away.

## THE SHADOW

HE WEPT to feel its presence in the room,  
Ever in waking or in slumbering,  
The shade that held his youth beneath its wing  
Void of great visions and bereft of bloom.  
Now as a man it marks him with its doom:  
Weighted in winter, sunless in the spring,  
His poor heart seemeth like a stony thing  
Hope decks as living flowers deck a tomb.

Or if for one short span he see it not,  
Breathing the sunshine of a spirit free,  
Or if he be at dusk love's neophyte,  
There waits at dawn the figure he forgot  
Beside his bed, and whispers ruthlessly:  
"Now pay me tears for yesterday's delight!"

## LOVE'S PATH

LONG parted are the shadows of the night,  
That bore away my dreams to other air.  
The cheated hours of life are lying bare,  
And what was far and fashioned out of sight,  
Stark in the day is pitilessly bright.  
Hypocrisy, so foul she seemeth fair,  
Walketh with pure pale blossoms in her hair,  
While Truth remains a thing of mould and  
    blight.

Think not mine eyes are veiled to earth's in-  
    trigues,  
That blindness led me to thee all the way.  
But long the new sands reach, the old retire,  
And many leagues have barred out many  
    leagues,  
And all my soul speeds forth to thee to-day,  
A strong, white love, flown undismayed through  
    fire.

## MY GUEST

IN WEARIED hope I waited for Success.  
There was a knock. Into my silent hour  
A form there swept, and perfume of a flower.  
“And art thou come,” I cried, “O arbitress  
Of my long fellowship with strife and stress?—  
But comest in the night, thou, dawn’s avower?  
And where the jewelled splendour of thy power,  
Thy crown of bay, the glory of thy dress?”

“Nay, I am Failure” came a voice forspent.  
Then round her presence such a light there  
seemed,  
As suddenly a star had crossed my door.  
She sat her down beside my hearth, and bent  
Her eyes upon me. For a space I dreamed.  
And strong I rose, as never strong before.

## BEETHOVEN'S PIANO

*When the call has summoned from the ground,  
When at last the soul that drew the sound  
    Taketh wings,  
Dust of time informed with image vain,  
    We remain,  
    Wood and strings.*

If a pilgrim, to the shrine avowed,  
Touch thy hallowed keys, a discord loud  
    Answereth  
Through the silent room, a cry for him,  
    Antonym  
    Of all death,

For the master spirit who could sight  
Through the world of sound a world of light  
    Heavenmost.  
*Once the name of Harmony I bore.*  
    Plead no more!  
    Sleep, poor ghost!

O thou helpmate of the master's toil,  
Time shall not distune, nor aught despoil  
    Thy sure fame.  
Means of very soul made vibrative,  
    Thou shalt live  
    In his claim.



He whose patient hands caressed thy keys  
Fixed his fiber in the centuries,  
    Theme on theme  
Building stronger, higher, in ascent  
    Permanent  
    And supreme.

For he suffered, and he faced his hour,  
Fought with fate, and plucked the perfect flower,  
    Victory.  
Still the waves of life are bearing it,  
    Wonder-lit,  
    Far and free,

Bearing olden longing, old desire,  
Pain, heroic rapture, battle's fire,  
    Hope unfurled,  
As, afar, yet ever unapart,  
    His great heart  
    Calls the world.

Thou rememberest the final grief.  
Deaf to thee, to all dear sound, how brief  
    Was the ban!  
How he shrank not! Thou rememberest  
    Well the test,  
    Well the man.

With the last despair, that reconciles,  
Lamentation hushed itself in smiles.

Evermore,  
To his inner realm of tones withdrawn,  
It was dawn  
At his door.

Up from demon-haunts he exorcised  
Shapes defeated, dark, unparadised,  
From his soul  
Giving with his gleaming faith outpoured  
Each a sword,  
A new goal.

In serener beauty to mankind  
Went the rhythmic message of his mind,  
Sweet and pure  
From the deepest sources of his art,  
Telling heart  
To endure.

. . . . .  
Linger on, belovèd ghost, that men,  
Seeing thee, may see his form again,  
Know his brow,  
Hear again humanity's great song  
Pierce the throng.  
Linger thou,

And within thy silent home rejoice.  
For a million homes have caught the voice  
Of the word.  
Not in earth's pale language it awoke.  
But it spoke!  
We have heard!

## A HINT OF SPRING

DROPS of rain and drops of sun,  
And the air is amber spun.  
From the winter's coma pass  
Silver shivers o'er the grass.  
Little sparks of memory  
Flash upon the soul and die ;  
While a child amid the way  
Thrusts arbutus fresh and gay  
From a somewhere full of bloom.  
Earth's exultant hope finds room  
And the poorest, in the shower,  
Longs to buy a little flower.

## THE SIGN

HER smiling is the sun for me,  
Though in her eyes the rain-floods dwell.  
For I, who know her heart so well,  
    Through love's divining,  
Can see the sudden sign, can see,  
Like to a gold-swept amethyst  
Adown the sunlight and the mist  
    Love's rainbow shining.

## THE POSTMAN

UP the road see him pass,  
In the sleet or the sun,  
Through the snow or the grass,  
With "*Good-day everyone!*"

See him patiently plod  
With our fate in his keep,  
And the same cheery nod,  
Be it sing now or weep.

Hope has peered through a door.  
Fear the step doth forestall.  
Laughing, Love runs before.  
"*Well, good-day to you all!*"

## VALENTINE

Lo! he knocks at your door  
In the moonshine.  
Bid him the threshold o'er,—  
Poor Valentine!

Warmth may he never win.  
Cold are the stars.  
Red is the fire within.  
Fast are the bars.

All within guards complete  
Joy warm and still.  
None saw the sorry feet  
Trudge up the hill.

None knew the song, apart,  
Patient and long.  
None heard a breaking heart  
Sob in the song.

Dim grows the curtained light.  
Soft is the sign:  
He may forth in the night,—  
Poor Valentine!

## SUN IN WINTER

THE rime is wan upon the fields and moss,  
And the dark cedars crown the frozen hill.  
The maples stretch their somber arms across  
The silver air. But now an ambient, still  
And steadfast light comes widening. And be-  
hold,

A giant herdsman drives his clouds apace  
Through bright auroral bars of changing gold!  
Behold now over all the eastern space  
Soft, infinite vapour-sheep that browse and  
spread,

Up to the zenith mounting silently,  
While on the horizon gleams, intent and red,  
The Cyclops' watchful, solitary eye!

## TO MY LAMP

I HAVE been of the day that is o'er.  
I have chatted and laughed and sought  
The something I hoped at dawn.  
And what has the day brought?

I have met this friend and that.  
And what is the day that is o'er?  
A nothing, a void, a gnat  
To tease at my heart's core.

Then come, little lamp! All day  
I hungered for thee. Outcrush  
The world with the book, the ray,  
The warmth, and the soul's hush!



## THE WIFE SPEAKS

(In 1871 appeared Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Poems, consisting largely of work executed more than ten years before, to which subsequent poems were added. Almost all of early date had been made into a manuscript volume by Rossetti for his wife during the two years of their union before her death. This was placed in her coffin on the day of her funeral and buried with her. In 1869, having for two or three years been importuned by many friends to consent to a disinterment, Rossetti yielded reluctantly, the grave was opened, the volume rescued, and, with additions, published.)

THE little book is winged to outer land.  
The book is gone, that was myself, more fair,  
Myself being buried twice, when my love's hand  
Laid it between my cheek and my bright hair.  
Ceiled by the earth, it lingered long with me;  
Till in my grave one night a ray was cast,  
And life's own throbbing fingers set it free.  
The blinded songs have seen the light, at last!

I bade my poet. He could not refuse,  
Feeling me urging upward from the clay.  
In dear old words I had been wont to use  
I sought him with my spirit night and day,  
Calling: "Belovèd, O my Poet, hear!  
Rescue the songs that were my diadem.  
Hear my dead voice, the living voices clear  
That may not hush till I have yielded them.  
And shall the future say how I, asleep,  
Waking, Art's votaress, let the dust bedim  
Forevermore the token Art would keep?"  
'Twas thus I called. And once I sang to him:

*Belovèd, hark!  
Draw back your burden  
Of songs, fair guerdon  
That lights my dark.*

*In aureole  
Of soundest dreaming  
Their silent gleaming  
Besets my soul.*

*My soul? The seas  
Eternal bear it.  
Shall worm inherit  
The soul of these?*

*Arise, efface  
The death-fast portal!  
Make them immortal,  
That shared my place!*

Sudden I seemed to see him, from my tomb,  
To see his head low-bowed in grief, and then  
To see him pacing up and down his room.  
And from my yearning heart I spoke again:  
“I feel the darkling cloud your thoughts fore-  
tell.

Ah! heed, no more than I, the folk that pass  
Ever conventioned upon taste to dwell,  
When high deeds are in balance, who shall mass  
With wit of words to prove you false to self;  
Nor those who, with a zeal to analyze  
Or turn a motive, feast upon their pelf,

And hover o'er the action vulture-wise,  
To scent the vapours newly wrung from grief;  
Nor calmer, loftier minds that magistrate  
Against you. They who know shall bring belief  
To your upholding. Love, no longer wait!  
Let the cloud lift. Reave dust and mould apart.  
Give reasonings none, nor answer for the end.  
Do right, and be misjudged, and trust your  
heart

To those who trust, before they comprehend.  
Let idle tongues rehearse, untrue or true,  
A secret life's dark, troubled narrative—  
All have I seen, the best and worst I knew.  
What has the world to say, since I forgive?  
Dear, my soul knew your impulse wild and  
swift

Of elemental anguish uttermost  
That cast the treasure life had hieroglyphed  
With mysteries to be my fellow-ghost.  
And yet, have not the gradual after-years  
Brought you the calm to see the lights that  
brow

The wider way? Ah, Poet, by your tears!  
Call back to earth the unborn spirit now!"

Yes, he was great enough to see the way,  
And strong to brave the moment and the pang.  
And when resistance faded far away,  
Again, but softly to myself, I sang:

*Now his messengers are here . . .  
Now they tread the dewfall glassen . . .  
Now I feel their fingers near  
Silently the door unfasten. . .*

*Soft the light is thrown.  
"Look," one whispereth,  
"In the house of death  
How her locks have grown!"*

*And another "There  
Should it lie. Ah, look,  
She has thralled the book  
With her passionate hair!"*

*They have closed again the door,  
Borne the treasure to his keeping.  
Messengers, now stay no more!  
Leave him to his balm of weeping!*

*Leave him to his curtained thought,  
To the shadows that immure him,  
Till a destiny unsought  
With an infinite echo lure him,*

*Who shall scale the magic bars  
Of the topmost towers that know them,  
Plunge his hand amid the stars,—  
While his lady sleeps below them.*

And I shall lie alone without my book,  
Who gathered long and close the sacred fire.  
Gently the little smothered voices shook  
Their ghostly golden shroud for earth's attire.  
Gladly I yielded them, all mine, all mine,—  
And in what pain of joy my soul unfurled  
She knows, she knows, who once, in Palestine,  
Renounced a Flower that lives to flower the  
world!

## THE ASPHODEL

### I

#### THE MOTHER

Now all the skill in Honolulu fails  
To keep my English motherhood from loss,  
While every hour upon my threshold nails  
The deepening shadow of a tiny cross.

He is so small to go alone, to live  
Alone. He never was alone before!  
He is so loving, quivering, sensitive,  
Viable with the breath of beauty, sore  
And struck discordant by what is not fair;  
So darling, too, so tender; and, whereas  
His years are seven, he never could outwear  
The dear appealing ways a baby has.  
Yet when I sorrow, then, O, very close,  
His cheek against my cheek, he often seems  
The mother, I the child, so deep he knows,  
Like a still meadow where the starlight dreams.

The priest was with me, when the word was cast,  
To tell of parting since the world began.  
He bade me think on one who, cycles past,  
Yielded her Treasure. Ah! she gave a Man,  
While, in my thought's recurrence, I must view  
The daily crucifixion of a child,

Ever in some new grief, some horror new,  
Until I faint for him, my undefiled.

To linger on the isle of leper men,  
Bare Molokai, where sickly noondays burn,  
Himself a little blighted citizen ;  
From heartbreak morn till heartbreak eve to  
turn

From its foul company to fix his eyes  
Upon a distant sail, a floating leaf ;  
To hear at bedtime for his lullabies  
The strokes of the Pacific on the reef,  
And, in the dark, without a kindly kiss,  
To sob his soul out! Dawn the doom destroy!  
For I shall seek a softer way than this  
For my sweet love, my little leper boy.

To guide his steps! What holier joy could be?  
And with him in his alien path to go!  
But the home voices would be haunting me.  
Then shall he forth, a little outcast? No!  
Silence, my tongue! O speak the terror not!  
I know another way. The cure thereof  
May for eternal tears be had. Forgot  
Be now the creed that I was taught, and love  
Be stronger than Jerusalem's high town!  
Though anguish of my penance never cease,  
Look, Lord of Hosts, look, holy angels, down!  
I give my soul forever for his peace!

## II

### THE CHILDREN

Stephana

Our house has grown so large and still, as  
though  
Sweet music had just died in all the rooms.

David

And in the garden, where he loves to go,  
There is a hush beneath the heavy blooms.

Stephana

Why has he been three days a prisoner?  
Why does she keep him ever from us all?  
We saw him from the window look with her,  
But come he will not, though we call and call.

David

She said our brother wearied at his play,  
That he must rest; and one night more, she said,  
She keeps him in her room. Let us away  
To find him gifts while yet the sun is red!

Louise

Now pleasant lie the shallows, where the gold  
Green ripple shakes afar the diamond bells.  
I'll fill a basket high as it will hold  
With charms and pebbles and the fairy shells!



### Hugh

In the full stream, like strands of drowning hair,  
The silken rushes bend them to the shore.  
I'll braid them to a banner he shall bear,  
When he is captain of his troop once more!

### Stephana

Down in the grove a bird has dropped a plume  
Of dazzling snow. I'll run, before the star,  
And find it, and I'll make him in his room  
A bonny hat as white as white clouds are!

### David

How sad our mother called: "Good-bye, good-  
bye,  
Dear David and Louise, and darling Hugh,  
Stephana sweet,—good-bye! The day must die.  
To-morrow come. I shall have need of you!"

### Louise

O hurry, let us down to grove and shore!  
For soon the dark will touch the dial's hour.  
O, we shall bring him back to us once more  
With little gifts, and with each gift a flower!

## III

### MOTHER AND CHILD

#### The Child

What makes the world so beautiful, so still?

The Mother

Love makes it so.

The Child

Is love in everything?

The Mother

O, that I do believe! Though hide it will,  
Somewhere at every depth its wonders cling.

The Child

The world seems very beautiful . . and yet . .

The Mother

What yet? What thought is with you, little son?

The Child

I heard the story of a banished set  
Packed close upon a ship—the lepers!—One  
Stood out from all the others, lean and bold,  
Scaly, with eyes that pierced the twilight  
through.

And those on whom he looked would horror hold.  
O mother, tell me that it was not true!

The Mother

It was not true.

The Child

Say no such beings are!

The Mother

And no such beings are. It is a sad,  
False picture. Put the ugly story far.  
The world is beautiful, my lovely lad.

The Child

Yet when alone I shut my eyes, sometimes  
I see him gaze at me from out the dark.

The Mother

I'll go and bring a lamp, and sing you rhymes,  
To chase the sorry vision, as you hark.

The Child

Mother, come back, O hurry close to me!  
Mother, I saw him once again!

The Mother

Saw whom?

The Child

O, him of whom we spoke! O, steadily  
He fixed me with his glances through the gloom!

The Mother

Be still, my child. No harm shall come.

Flower-bells

Are closing. Nested are the birdlings wise.  
Dear speeding rain the misty moon foretells.  
The world is beautiful. How fresh it lies!

The Child

Mother, then, mother, go and light the lamp.  
Stay not too long. And I shall truly try  
To think of birds and flowers, and the sweet  
damp  
That through the window comes, and you close  
by.

The Mother

I call to you close by, across one door!  
(*Now breathing give me courage where I  
stand!*)

The Child

Mother!

The Mother

I come! The light is on your floor.

The Child

The leper! Help! He has me by the hand!

The Mother

I come, O darling! Look, the room is bright.  
And how I love you, love you! Dear, lie still,  
Lie very still. Love holds you safe to-night.  
(*And shall I dare the dreaded cup to fill?*)  
Here is a drink, my thirsty love, for you.  
It is a drink more sweet than water is.  
Raise your dear golden head, and sip the brew!

The Child

Another sip! Now tell me, what is this?

The Mother

It is a human soul. Now drink again!

The Child

I never knew a soul could taste so sweet!

The Mother

My darling! It shall take away all pain.  
Now quiet lie.

The Child

I hear strange footsteps beat.

The Mother

You hear the children in the garden come.  
They speak of you upon the terrace now.  
I'll sing you what they waft to you therefrom.  
(*O Sleep, come not too swiftly to his brow!*)

(*She sings.*)

Now all within love's garden-light  
(*Gates of a Dreamland town!*)  
Upon your bed of damask white  
A pearly dove lit down.

A dove lit down with kisses four,—  
Fair English flowers were they,—  
And left them with the love it bore,  
And flew again away.

Louise's was a lily-kiss  
Upon your shining hair.  
When I put up my hand, like this,  
I feel it resting there.

On one the dew was glistening yet.  
(*O, gates of Slumberland!*)  
Hugh gave his dearest violet  
To blossom in your hand.

David a yellow daffodil  
Bade the dove bear aloft.  
It lieth on your forehead still,  
Fragrant and fond and soft.

And all within love's garden-close  
(*The little daylight slips!*)  
Stephana sent a sweet wild rose  
To lie upon your lips.

#### The Child

Dear little greetings! How I love them all! . . .  
The dove goes winging to the moon's high  
tower. . .  
There is another kiss. . . I felt it fall. . .  
And the dove brought it not . . . a stranger-  
flower.

#### The Mother

(*She sings.*)  
And all within love's garden-spell  
(*The mother watched, apart*)

An angel brought an asphodel,  
And laid it on your heart.

The Child

O, I am half asleep! But sing, but sing!  
I like to enter Dreamland on your voice.

The Mother

You almost fell asleep while listening.  
I'll sing another song, some drowsy choice.

*(She sings.)*

My little one is quiet now.  
The dream shall nestle on his brow.  
O Fairer than the things we dream,  
O Something Greater than We Seem,  
And Tenderer than the Earth and Sea,  
Mother my little one for me!

The lamp is bright. Yet through the door  
Comes dark as never dark before.  
Now unto her be sorrow's strife,  
Who lifts the pain with his young life.  
He sleeps. O Love's Infinity,  
Mother my little one for me!

IV

THE CHILDREN. THE MOTHER.

David

At last it is to-morrow! All night long

Pounded a deafening rain. But morning came,  
And swept the beauty of a breeze, like song,  
That seemed to say through all the house his  
name.

Louise

All night I dreamed about my treasures small,  
Pebbles and charms and shells of magic rare,  
And in my dream I heard them one and all  
Like fairy bells go chiming on the air.

David

The rain upon the roof. You heard the rain.

Louise

It was no rain. They chimed, clear gem on gem,  
And laughed his laughter. And I dreamed  
again:  
The bells were gone! Some hand had stolen  
them!

Hugh

I dreamed that all my rushes I had bound  
Beside the stream, and that I hurried there  
At dawn. No rushes could I find. I found  
Upon their place a strand of golden hair.

Stephana

I made a hat as white as cloud. Then look,  
With earliest sleep my endless dream began:  
The plume-gay hat my little brother took,



And set it on his head, and off he ran,  
I knew not whither. And I wept, because  
All night I searched the world, but found him  
not.

Hugh

Where is our little brother? Nearer draws  
The noon. She bade us come. Has she forgot?

David

See! She is standing in the doorway dim.  
Mother! Your eyes are strange, your face is  
white.  
Mother! Where is he? We have come for him.

The Mother

Children, your little brother died last night.









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